

# Plain View



## Crop Management and Marketing Are the Key



### About Dan Krienke

This month, we chose Dan Krienke as our Grower of the Month. Dan operates dryland and irrigated farms in Ochiltree and Lipscomb Counties. Extension Agent Scott Strawn talked with Dan about irrigation and a strong marketing plan.

By Scott Strawn- Ochiltree County Extension Agent  
Texas Cooperative Extension

**D**an Krienke operates dryland and irrigated farms in Ochiltree and

Lipscomb counties in the Northeast Texas Panhandle near Perryton. He was raised in Lipscomb county and after studying agriculture at Clarendon College in 1974, he came home to the family wheat-fallow farm. Since then, his dryland operations have expanded to include wheat-grain sorghum-fallow rotations.

While he continues to farm dryland operations, Dan's main objective over the last 10 years is the efficient use of center-pivot irrigation. Intensively managed rotations of irrigated wheat, grain sorghum, and soybeans and a well thought-out marketing plan are keys to Dan's farming profitability.

Maximizing wheat yields (90 plus bushels to the acre) while maintaining irrigation water use efficiency has been one of the main goals of the management plan.

Since 1996, he has cooperated with Texas Cooperative Extension agronomists and county agriculture agents in wheat variety trials under irrigation and dryland growing conditions. The trials provide useful information to Dan and other producers for variety selection. The information gained led Dan to use new varieties and to blend different varieties during planting.

Closely managing crop water use is another tool in Krienke's arsenal. "My goal is to manage irrigation, rainfall and stored soil moisture to maximize bushels", said Krienke. He records rainfall data at each of his fields, and he also meters his wells for exact irrigation totals in acre inches. In managing soil moisture, he uses moisture sensors at 1,2, and 3 foot levels to record moisture levels on a weekly ba-


sis. All of these records are combined and compared back to the daily evapotranspiration rates reported by the North Plains PET Network. "I try to maintain total water levels in my wheat fields at 100% of PET," said Krienke.

The third major component in getting top wheat yields is a strong fertility program. Krienke soil tests each year to determine wheat fertilizer requirements before planting. He relies heavily on the carry over nitrogen and phosphorous by planting his wheat no-till behind grain sorghum or soybeans each year.

After stand establishment, he monitors wheat plant growth stages in the fall and spring to determine rates and amounts of additional nitrogen to apply through the center pivot. "My fertigation program is the final key to getting to my 100 bushel yield goal by simply 'spoonfeeding' the crop when it needs it."

In addition to top irrigated yields, he realized the value of a well thought-out marketing plan. In 1996, he attended the Texas Cooperative Extension Service "Master Marketer" program. In the process, he became a key leader in Ochiltree County by starting a marketing club for producers. "I start my marketing plan even before I plant," said Krienke. He uses a combination of forward contracts, options, and futures contracts in increments to market and hedge his production. He pays attention to insurance programs and implements them when necessary.

For many farmers, intensive crop management and aggressive marketing may not sound like their cup of tea, but Dan Krienke shows that it can be both challenging and rewarding. For more about about Dan Krienke, please visit our Web site.



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*We are Areawide Pest Management for Wheat, a five-year project developed by the USDA Agricultural Research Service, to demonstrate pest management practices for the Russian wheat aphid and greenbug. Our main goal is to collaborate with wheat producers in evaluating and demonstrating non-chemical pest management techniques, with particular emphasis on the management of the Russian wheat aphid and the greenbug. The elements of our program include:*

- *Crop Diversification*
- *Variety Selection*
- *Field Monitoring and biocontrol*
- *Best Management practices for Wheat*

### **Using the keys for success...**

**"Danny not only does an excellent job of farming, but he is a leader when it comes to price risk management," said Karen Pshigoda, a local wheat producer and fellow marketing club member. Before he plants, Dan Krienke puts together a strong marketing plan. For more information about Krienke, go to our Web site.**



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